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PATRIOTIC * POEM



— ON —

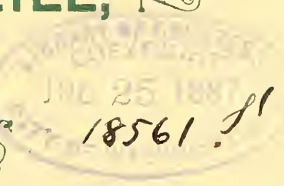
IRELAND

— AND THE —

IRISH PEOPLE,

PUBLISHED BY

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F. J. O'NEILL,



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PATRIOTIC POEM

ON

IRELAND and the IRISH PEOPLE.

Descriptive of the generous soul
Who must despise usurped control;
Which sentiment holds highest place
In all of the Milesian race.

Likewise, will this poem explain
Some tyranny of Bessie's reign,
And how, by Saxon cunning fraud,
Has Erin felt the vengeful rod.

Her hopes and energies trod down
By tyrant rule—usurper's crown;
And how for ages she withstood
While tyrants drained her martyrs' blood.

F. J. O'NEILL.

—By a CLAN-A BOY.

INTRODUCTION.

DEAR READERS: I find that the following poem was written on the 19th January, 1875, and was called for because Dougall, of the Montreal Witness, had advertised a premium for the best poems on Ireland and the Irish people. And the writer of this our patriotic poem had observed (by reading some of the poems which appeared in the papers and were headed in competition for the prize) that the animus of the poem writers was hostile to that honor and glory which is the rightful inheritance of true Irishmen, and having reason to believe that the Montreal Witness was a defamer of the Irish people, he set about to write a true poem on Ireland, all of which he wrote on the night of Tuesday, 19th January. He found that the premium had on that day been awarded to some other. He well knew that Dougall would not give publication to this poem; and as it is now in my possession I bring it before the public because I considered it to be too truthful and too patriotic to be left longer in oblivion.

If this will meet the desires and approbation of those for whom it is intended. I will shortly bring before the people some poems written by the same author, upon subjects very interesting to old and to the young, and well calculated to establish elevated ideas and noble principles in the reader.

In this poem I intend offering to the reader that source of pastime, pleasure and satisfaction which I hope you will all enjoy in the reading thereof.

While I remain yours sincerely,

The publisher,

F. J. O'NEILL.

A poem friend Dougall could admire
 (On Erin) to get his desire.
 He offers premium for the best,
 Which might induce some poor distressed
 To write with view of pleasing him
 And suit the story to his whim,
 Since judge of poems may well decide
 As prejudice or whim will guide.

These things considered, in full scope
 Of the premium sum, destroys my hope;
 Since facts I'll state with truthful ease,
 Whether they please or may displease.
 And this I write in double haste
 I know won't suit friend Dougall's taste.
 But if truth, exempt from all disguise,
 Prevails, I ought to get the prize.

And as I find I come too late
 For the premium sum, I don't compete.
 Thus independently I stand,
 So truth and justice will command
 Each sentence that I will indite,
 And state each line I mean to write—
 Which poem will speak where'er it goes
 Of Erin's greatness, wrongs, and woes.

P O E M .

In the Atlantic ocean, west
Of England, lies an island blest
With fertile soil and wholesome air.
In Europe, there's no isle so fair
With mountains, rivers, valleys green.
This isle, long named the ocean queen,
In high pre-eminence does stand,
And this the isle called IRELAND.

The climate there is mild and good,
No frost intense to chill the blood.
No sultry sun will incommode
The weary traveller on his road,
Nor will his burning beams half broil
The workman at his daily toil.
By gentle breezes always fanned
Is Nature's favorite, IRELAND.

But to describe all Erin's beauty
Is to one hand a hopeless duty,
Because a lifetime would he spend
Ere he would half get to the end.
Each harbor, lake, coast, creek and bay,
From Cove of Cork to the Causeway,
With her great edifices hoary
That yet proclaim her ancient glory.

And since for natural beauty she
 Is the gem emerald of the sea,
 On her no longer need I dwell,
 As history gives her tale so well.
 If more her merits would yon scan,
 Read Arosius and McGeogh-e-gan,
 While I'll endeavor to describe
 Her nobly brave Milesian tribe.

McGeogh-e-gan did clearly trace
 This great Milesian noble race.
 At Noah has he first begun,
 And on through Japhet, Noah's son.
 There follows in his catalogue
 From Japhet's son the great Magog.
 Through Finius Farsa, Scythian king,
 He does the learned Niull bring.

To Egypt Niul crosses the water
 And married Pharaoh's lovely daughter—
 The beauteous Scota was her name.
 From these the Gadaleans came;
 Which tribe we find did emigrate
 And settled for a time in Crete,
 Till afterwards they moved again
 And fixed their colony in Spain.

This colony increased in Spain.
At length Milesius came to reign.
Soon after he departed life
His sons—with them his widowed wife—
Embarked and left the Spanish shore
For a western island to explore,
Which isle, by Druid's prophecy,
Was to become their property.

The Milesians gained the Irish soil
And settled there despite turmoil,
Having bards and sages, even more
Men versed in all the ancient lore.
Then Erin's sons were educated,
As is by truthful writers stated,
In learning more than Grecian sages
In the learning of the pagan ages.

And such did pagan Druids teach
Until St. Patrick came to preach
The Gospel, and Christ crucified,
And erect the church for which Christ died.
The pagans met him face to face,
And quickly did the truth embrace,
Which proves, with other facts combined,
They were educated and refined.

If not educated and refined,
 With gentle soul and enlightened mind,
 Had ignorance in them been stronger
 They would have sat in darkness longer;
 For by observing we can find
 That the more enlightened is the mind
 The more it will in truth delight,
 And more easily brought from wrong to
 right.

There then was education nourished,
 The Church of Christ for ages flourished;
 The people freed from sinful taints,
 And Ireland was the isle of saints.
 Religious houses were erected,
 And men of learning were respected.
 Then Ireland, the most learned nation,
 Was Garden styled, of Education.

Age after age, her children good,
 Proud Ireland in her greatness stood.
 With saints and sages, warriors too,
 Among the nations were but few
 Or none, with Erin could compare
 For sons so brave and daughters fair.
 Fair, chaste and pure as Erin's waters
 Were Erin's lovely, noble daughters.

Such was the state of Ireland then,
 Though ignorantly blinded men,
 Degraded souls in foul condition,
 Say *these were days of superstition*.
 No, they were days of heartfelt pleasure,
 Religion was the heavenly treasure
 That Irish prized, and truly sought,
 And worshipped God as Christians ought.

Then Religion, Love, and Liberty
 Increased in Ireland day by day.
 Although some feud or war or strife
 At times may have embittered life,
 The Irish had a happy nation
 Till Luther spouted Reformation.
 Then tyranny, by vengeful stroke,
 On the Irish strove to force the yoke.

Here now did Ireland's pleasures end,
 When Harry and his choicest friend,
 And Ned and Bessy's majesty
 Combined to drive true faith away.
 Then Bess commenced her penal laws
 To aid the Retormation cause,
 While martyrs bled beneath her thongs—
 And here we're into Ireland's wrongs.

The penal laws oppress the people;
 Off their church must come the steeple,
 Their priest's head rated as the wolf's,
 Their headless bodies thrown in gulfs.
 Some were consigned to watery graves,
 Some nobles were sold off as slaves,
 And heroes dragged to suffer slaughter
 On Bessy's wheel, *Scavenger's Daughter*.

The *pitch cap*, *gibbet*, and the *rack*.
 Followed in this murderous track;
 And Erin (once a glorious nation),
 By law deprived of education,
 Despoiled of commerce and of trade,
 This state of things more bloodshed made,
 And drove men from their homes afar
 Or forced them to defensive war.

Our brave, unconquered warrior clan
 Withstood the Saxon to a man.
 In many a well-fought battlefield
 They made the tyrant Saxon yield.
 For years and years these warriors bled—
 Their martial spirit never fled
 From the succeeding generation,
 Proved by the following quotation:—

"Remember at Clontarf, how the heroes defended
 Our country, and freed it from the tyrant Dane.
 Their invincible spirit through posterity descended,
 And urged our ancestors to conquest again.
 The clan Hyniall of Erin, so long famed for bravery,
 Oft marshalled their clans Saxon progress to curb.
 For centuries they freed this our loved land from slavery,
 Remember at Port More, Blackwater and Benburb.

"At Limerick they fought, at Aughrim on the Shannon,
 No cowards or traitors among the Clan-a-boye.
 They conquered at Ardmagh, Fort Morris and Dungannon,
 And faced all the legions of bloody Mountjoy.
 With pride and grief mingled should be recollected
 Before conquering Felim how British forces ran,
 Till with their drawn bodies a bridge was erected
 On which the noble hero marched dry across the Bann.*

"Drumfleigh the yellow ford in Clontabret still reminds us
 (How these warriors conquered and swept down the foe.
 Who then could have thought that futurity would find us
 Trampled into slavery, mean, abject, and low.
 For centuries sixteen by them we were defended,
 The pride of Roman legions they humbled of old;
 Who would not feel proud when legally descended,
 Of such a line of heroes great, glorious, and bold."

* Where stands the bridge since then called "the Battleford bridge."

None but the dastard, craven soul
 Could tamely bear usurped control,
 Or aid the tyrant that oppressed
 And drained the life blood from his breast.
 Just so our noble Irish race
 Could not endure such foul disgrace,
 But fought and met their deaths like men,—
 Which proves the Irish warriors then,

And are so still, where'er they stand,
 At home or in a foreign land.
 How Irishmen should yet enjoy
 The Irish deeds at Fontenoy;
 And let me, Saxon, ask of you,
 Who gained the day at Waterloo?
 You must say he was Ireland's son,
 Though a hateful, cursed, disgraceful one.

Enough of war, as it is well known,
 That Ireland, and but she alone,
 By stripling young and grandsire hoary,
 Still fought for country and God's glory.
 Yet they maintain their ancient creed,
 For which they bled and yet must bleed.
 Though robbed and plundered as a nation
 They kept the means of soul's salvation.

Next Erin's sons, with soul sublime,
 We find now placed in every clime.
 Of whom at home here I'll begin
 With the noble Earl Dufferin.
 Long may he live to well employ
 That pride of titles, CLAN-A-BOYE,*
 Which title proves, and without fail,
 He enjoys the rights of an O'Neill.

His generous soul and manners mild
 Characterize old Erin's child,
 His gentleness in our opinion
 Must gain all hearts in the Dominion;
 His noble acts on every hand
 Do honor to old Ireland,
 And tell into the slanderer's face,
 "No tyrants came of Irish race."†

For Ireland's orators and preachers,
 Her poets, lawyers, science teachers,
 No land can equal her, I'm sure.
 In her Grattan, Burke, O'Connell, Moore,
 With Cahill and Curran, and a host
 Of patriot heroes she can boast.
 Seeflood and Emmett and Fitzgerald,—
 Can you match them in your Saxon world?

*Clan-a-buidh, or Clan-a-boy—or as Dufferin wrote to his title, Clan de boy—was in days gone by the distinguishing soubriquet of the O'Neills.

†This eulogy was by the writer given to Lord Dufferin, the then governor of Canada, because that he, in the exercise of his royal power, had a short time before pardoned and set at liberty two men, viz., Louis D. Riel and his companion, who had been found guilty of murder by the courts in Canada and were then under sentence of death.

Now the merits of her sons discussed,
 To relate a something here I must,
 In relating which my mind grows sick.
 The conditions made at Limerick
 The treacherous Saxon shortly broke,
 Then on the Irish forced the yoke;
 And in perfidy they onward went
 Till they robbed us of our parliament.

John Bull has got the parliament,
 And Ireland's woes breed discontent.
 Her sons excluded from high places,
 Or must accept them with disgraces.*
 Being robbed by cunning Saxon fraud,
 She now must feel the Saxon rod;
 Her commerce gone, but what came of it
 It went for British tyrants' profit.

Still worse by far their cunning tricks,
 By law they trampled Catholics,
 And pressed them sorely every way
 By Protestant ascendancy;
 For Castlerea and Billy Pitt
 Would strengthen Saxon power by it,
 And weaken Ireland's hopes, once hearty,
 By setting party against party.

*An Irishman was excluded from every place of trust or profit unless he would sell his soul and renounce allegiance to his God. But the tyrant, thank God, comparatively speaking, found but few to sell their honor.

Internal strife is constant, and
 This scheme by British statesmen planned
 Succeeded well, and gave them power
 To rule their dupes in evil hour—
 By which the Saxon still grew stronger—
 And held their dupes in bondage longer
 Than otherwise they could have done
 Had these party quarrels ne'er begun.

As the building that is built on sand,
 Or house divided cannot stand,
 So the nation that will separate
 Through party feuds, will find too late
 That to their rivals they give strength,
 And must to slavery fall at length
 As Ireland did, though not subdued,
 But weakened by vile party feud.

These Erin's woes, but only part
 Which sorely crush the patriot's heart,
 Here let us see, if we're not blind,
 A remedy we yet might find
 For Erin's woes, for Erin's pain,
 To restore to her her rights again.
 That remedy we well may say,
 Is nothing less than unity.

We see some man of talent writes,
 And "*peerless science*" he invites,
 "To clear from slavery in haste
 "*Her soul a phantom-haunted waste.*"
 But this poor man, wo his condition,
 He dreads old Ireland's "*superstition,*"
 Which dread must in his stomach stick
 So long as he's a heretic.

In presumptuous darkness must he sit.
 Since the smoke that issued from the pit
 So dimmed his vision he can't see
 True faith, the fullest liberty
 That clears the soul, and frees the mind
 From bigotry, with which he's blind.
 Science he called, but meant to say,
 "*Come, infidel, philosophy.*"

Let Irishmen be all combined,
 Throw party feeling to the wind,
 Consider well their sad condition,
 And with warlike arms send petition,
 They shortly might be well content,
 And, blessed with their own parliament,
 Would flourish as in days of yore,
 With commercial freedom on the shore.

I wish these hopes were realized,
 Which will, if by the bulk advised.
 Then Irish foes would pitch away
 That baneful love of bigotry
 Which did reduce the Irish nation
 And place her in such servile station.
 Then men would act one to the other
 As brother should with Christian brother.

My statements, which are truly strict,
 Some may incline to contradict.
 But the critic who may try such freak
 I guess will find his proofs too weak.
 Let you, who feel this wring your maws,
 Read Scully on the penal laws.
 These things, as legal, there are stated,
 And worse by far than I related.

To the Home Rule League I wish good speed
 Until it sees its country freed
 And stand once more in lofty station
 The greatest, bravest little nation,
 Possessing sons of noblest nature,
 With bravest soul and manly feature,
 Rejoicing, free from slavery
 And cheered with smiling liberty.

When Erin's joys will have returned,
 For which the brave have long time mourn'd,
 I then may write another poem
 Descriptive of my Irish home
 Down in Tyrone, north of the Shannon,
 About a mile from sweet Dungannon,
 Where I have spent my boyhood days
 Pursuing truth and harmless plays.

To bring this rhyming to an end,
 Believe me, reader, I'm your friend,
 And one who, from his tender youth,
 Still held it crime to cloak the truth;
 Who spurns all falsehood and disguise,
 And must the sycophant despise.
 Straightforward truths did I employ,
 Which best becomes a Clan-a-boye.



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